

Alan's Story



Like many young men, I planned to share a house with a friend after leaving college. But, in my third and final year, I decided that I didn't want to finish my course and came home to live with my family in a small village. I have Down's Syndrome. My family talked to me about what I wanted from my life. I didn't like the idea of going to a day centre and I didn't want to do another college course. I wanted to do things I enjoy, like going to the gym, going bowling, going shopping and doing activities like cooking, writing and photography.

After finding out about personal budgets, my family put all of my interests into a weekly plan. The plan was agreed with my mother acting as my agent and managing the personal budget on my behalf. My mother keeps the books, manages the payroll and expenses and recruits my personal assistants (PAs) together with me.

One year into my personal budget I am really making the most of the opportunities it has given me, and my week is full of the things I like to do as well as the things that I need to do. I go to the local gym, shopping and bowling, and spend time at home when I clean my room and cook my lunches. I make decisions about how I want to be supported and the role I want my PAs to take. My mother says: 'Alan is gaining confidence by the day, his general health has improved and he is now a very fit young man. He has taken up running, including completing a half-marathon, and swims at the local pool three times a week. He has plans to go back to college one day a week to take a pottery course; he is also looking for work experience as one of his goals is to have a job.'

I am well known in the village where I live, and my PAs are local people who know me and are interested in being with me and helping me to make the most of my interests. With my new-found confidence, I am now thinking about a home of my own again – although not just yet!